

October 13, 2026

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Madam Secretary:

The undersigned hunting, fishing, and wildlife conservation organizations appreciate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's effort to update the Forest Service Travel Management Rule and share the goal of improving responsible access to our national forests and grasslands while providing for more efficient planning. Hunters and anglers depend on reliable access to public lands and recognize that roads and trails must be managed to avoid conflicts with fish and wildlife and conserve the habitat that sustains healthy populations and quality hunting and fishing opportunities.

We believe a durable final rule would provide clear and consistent direction while allowing local decisions to respond to on-the-ground conditions. We encourage the Department to:

- Ensure early and ongoing coordination with state fish and wildlife agencies. These entities bring essential data, expertise, and management authority related to wildlife populations, habitat conditions, and hunting and fishing opportunities.
- Maintain meaningful direction to reduce conflicts among users and avoid conflicts with wildlife. Route density, timing, and location should account for big game seasonal ranges, security habitat, watershed health, and other important fish and wildlife habitat, while also considering public safety and the purposes for which roads and trails were designed and are maintained.
- Ensure planning and implementation requirements are focused, enforceable, and proportionate to available agency and partner resources.

We appreciate the August 24 Notice of Intent's focus on improving maps and public information and for providing greater consistency for game retrieval. We additionally support practical ways to reconsider access where routes may have been unnecessarily closed. However, changes should not substantially increase habitat disturbance or fragmentation, reduce water quality, or diminish the value of seasonal habitat for elk, deer, and other wildlife. Nor should the rule impose obligations the agency cannot reasonably implement or enforce.

Our community looks forward to working with USDA, the Forest Service, state agencies and local partners, and other stakeholders to inform this rulemaking and help develop a final rule that expands responsible access, reduces conflicts, conserves fish and wildlife resources, and can be successfully implemented.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Archery Trade Association
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
Boone and Crockett Club
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Delta Waterfowl
Fly Fishers International
Houston Safari Club
Mule Deer Foundation
National Bobwhite & Grassland Initiative Foundation
National Deer Association
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Falconers Association
Pope and Young Club
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute

Cc:

Michael Boren, Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment
Tom Schultz, Chief, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service